



Henry J. Rudisill's Vineyard

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HENRY J. RUDISILL'S VINEYARD

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FOREWORD

The citizens of Fort Wayne in the 1870's were interested in and enjoyed the "finer occupations of life." Henry J. Rudisill's farm, especially his vineyard, was a favorite topic of conversation, for few men had either time or resources to follow such pursuits. This article from the FORT WAYNE DAILY SENTINEL of 1871 is reprinted in the hope that it will recreate some of the atmosphere in which Fort Wayne existed eighty-two years ago. Grammar, punctuation, and spelling have been changed in the following account to conform to current usage.

The vineyard of our gentlemanly and efficient county auditor, Mr. Henry J. Rudisill, is located one mile directly north of the courthouse. Of the many beautiful tracts of land edging the suburbs of Fort Wayne, none so well exemplify our ideals of beauty, grace, and utility as does his vineyard. Part of the vineyard is located on a summit from where it slopes into miniature valleys. The St. Joseph River quietly meanders on the north; a little to the east, the Fort Wayne, Jackson and Saginaw Railroad bustles with moving trains. The natural endowments of the site, which Mr. Rudisill selected for a homestead, are great; he has added to them his own excellent taste, judgment, and enterprise. The arrangement and intensive cultivation of grapes, small fruits, vegetables, and flowers have made his farm a rare point of attraction.

Mr. Rudisill invited us to visit his vineyard, and when we did so yesterday [August 31, 1871], we were surprised not only by its size but also by the variety of vines and the prolific crop upon them. The Concord grape, known for its delicious flavor, productiveness, hardiness, and large size, is the specialty of the vineyard; and among other popular cultivated varieties are the Hartford, Delaware, Iona, and Diana. Roger's Hybrids (numbers 1, 4, 15, and 43), which are crosses between the New England Fox grape and the Black Hamburg, are grown with several varieties of white grapes. Among these, the Maxatowny and the Rebecca mature late and are not yet ripe.

Although this season has not been noted for the production of grapes, Mr. Rudisill's crop is expected to weigh six tons, for his vines are burdened

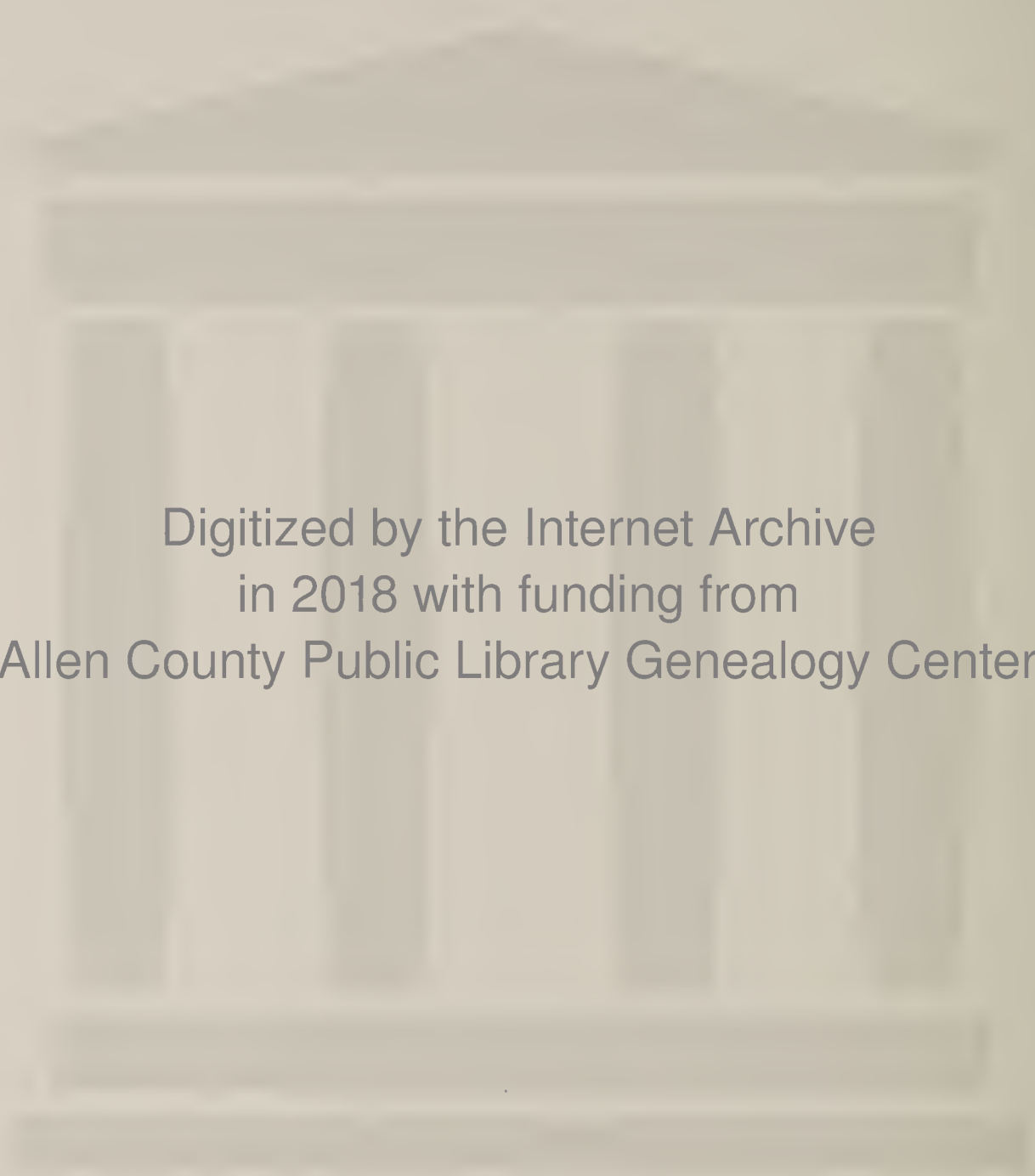
with rich and luxuriant clusters. If we visualize the six tons of grapes grown in this one vineyard plus immense quantities produced on other farms and gardens, and if we remember that none are shipped from the city, we realize the appreciation of our citizens for this delectable fruit. What could be better evidence of the value of their careful cultivation? From our experience with the variety of Concord usually found on our market, we readily acknowledge the superior quality of that from the Rudisill vineyard. This excellence has been attained by superior cultivation based on the energy and experience of Mr. Rudisill and his able German culturist, Miller.

Eighty-four acres are already devoted to grapes, small fruits, vegetables, and flowers, and now Mr. Rudisill is turning his attention to three or four acres of strawberries. These show great promise and will reach our market next summer unless the season is unfavorable. Mr. Rudisill is also preparing to grow vegetables in a large, well-arranged building north of his house. From this source we will be provided with garden produce early in February as are the metropolitan areas.

Of the many beautiful plants on Mr. Rudisill's grounds, we were particularly impressed by nonblooming varieties with year-round foliage comparable in beauty and attractiveness to popular household favorites.

Before concluding this article, we wish to call attention to the clean and excellent condition of this large tract of land. Here, no doubt, lies the secret of Mr. Rudisill's success in raising the best produce usually grown in this climate. The well-cultivated garden of one of our most painstaking citizens could not show more signs of industry and care. Before many years

this farm with its vineyard will be one of our greatest places of attraction, and we are inclined to think that Mr. Rudisill will share it to a certain extent with the public.



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